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Saint Helens.

ADDRESS

TO THE

NATION,

BY THE

SEAMEN

AT ST. HELEN'S.

SECOND EDITION.

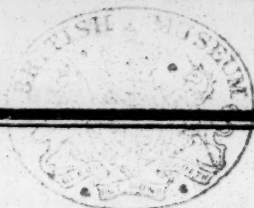
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A D D R E S S.



*To a LOYAL and DISCERNING NATION,
The following Lines are humbly submitted.*

AS various reports have been propagated by malicious and unprincipled men, WE, THE SEAMEN OF HIS MAJESTY'S FLEET, under the command of Admiral Lord BRIDPORT, Knight of the Bath, &c. think it a duty incumbent on ourselves, to publish at large our just and moderate requests—Grievances which were promised to be redressed—Snares laid to entrap our loyal brethren, such as were deemed heads of our proceedings—the particulars of our unfortunate affair, which happened on board the London the 7th instant—unjust aspersions thrown on our characters as British Seamen, by an Honorable Member in the House of Commons, with observations on the same—and our particular reason for not proceeding to sea, that our grateful countrymen might not be deceived, or ourselves prejudiced by false reports.

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WE requested an augmentation of our wages, which was complied with, though reluctantly on the part of MINISTERS: Our late wages were,

			£.	s.	d.	
Able Seamen	—	—	1	2	6	} per Month.
Landmen	—	—	0	17	6	

The present is,

Able Seamen	—	—	1	10	0	} per Month.
Ordinary Seamen	—	—	1	2	0	
Landmen	—	—	1	1	0	

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There being now three classes, we requested likewise that the Purser's eighths should be taken off, which was complied with—the weight of the different Articles were as follows :—

Bread	—	—	14 Ounces
Cheese	—	—	9 ditto
Butter	—	—	12 ditto

Of spirituous liquors and small beer, the Purser had an eighth out of each Gallon :—The eighths are now taken off, and we have the full weight.

HIS MAJESTY'S PARBON was then requested to exempt our Brethren from having any punishment inflicted on them for trivial misdemeanor, and our non-compliance to the order given for going to Sea ;—His Majesty was pleased to grant the same ; we then returned to the ordinary discharge of duty, as desired, but from that we never deviated during our perseverance, except weighing anchor, which we positively refused, excepting our requests were complied with. We then went to St. Helen's, distant from Spithead about three miles, on the signal being made by the Admiral (excepting three Ships of the line, which had not their private grievances redressed, viz. London, Marlborough, and La Nymphe.)

The wind did not favour our proceeding to Sea during our silence, for by this we wish to be understood we were in a state of suspense, as there was no sign of an Act being passed ; we could not be deceived in that point, as the freedom of the Press is allowed, and several of us in the Fleet can read. Our reasons are obviously not confined alone to the Act not being passed, although it lay dormant for fourteen days ; private instructions were sent to each Commander in the Fleet, of which we are not ignorant, as will be found in the sequel. Full allowances were granted to some Ship's Companies supposed to be the leading ones, and not to others, which caused a suspicion throughout the whole Fleet. The Ships remaining at Spithead had not their private grievances redressed, though many days had elapsed, nor any sign of their being redressed : be it understood by private grievances—trying by Court Martial such Officers as had, respectively, behaved in a tyrannical and oppressive
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five manner, unbecoming the character of Gentlemen and the dignified station they filled.

Private murmurings were heard :—at length, breasts of Seamen, fired with indignation at being neglected, burst forth on the 7th instant. It was then, oh ! horrid to relate ! that we found out the schemes laid out to sacrifice some of the brightest gems that ever adorned this or any other country. Permit us, grateful countrymen, to ask a few questions on the occasion, and as you are at a considerable distance from us at present, and ignorant of the particulars, permit us also to return the answers, and we will cheerfully submit the whole to your consideration,

Were we not united in one common cause ?—Ans. Yes.

Were we not bound by oath to persevere in our resolutions of not going to sea until our just and moderate requests were attained, and the sanction of Parliament given for the performance of the same ?—Yes.

Did we not solicit our most GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN'S pardon for any excesses committed by our brethren during our late perseverance ?—Yes.

Was it not granted ?—Yes.

No sooner was that pardon granted, but, in direct contradiction to that his Royal Proclamation, were individuals selected for the express purpose of sacrificing them to malice and private resentment.

Are then poor, but loyal individuals' lives to be sacrificed for the mere sport of tyrants ?—Not according to the laws of civilized nations.

Is such the recompence for meritorious service tendered to their amiable sovereign and benevolent nation ?

To whom are we to look or apply for protection ?

We cannot surmise, since all laws, human and divine, are trampled under foot. Miserable indeed, then, is the situation of the loyal, but unfortunate Tars, whom their country at large adores, but whom tyrannical and malicious men in office seek, basely seek, to betray and sacrifice : If a national bond is not given, such will be the disaster some will experience.

Will not the following melancholy catastrophe evince the whole world of our assertions ?—On Sunday the 7th instant,
ever

ever to be recorded, a gallant chief, (not indeed so, but as such represented by an Honorable Member, Mr. WHITBREAD;—perhaps the Honorable Member committed a mistake, it was surely his gallantry with the fair sex he alluded to, for his country is ignorant of any gallant action by him performed) with his officers in concert, espied the boats of the fleet proceeding on board the Marlborough, which was fortunate enough on their side; as the London's officers had the quarter-deck guns loaded with grape and canister shot, ready to fire into them. Admiral COLPOYS had all hands sent aft, and informed them there was something amiss amongst the ships at St. Helen's, and desired them to go below, run in the lower-deck guns, and lower the ports; and then part of them to return on deck, and hoist in the boats, which was complied with. The same being done, all hands were ordered below; at the same time officers appearing armed, and the marines were armed and accoutred with bayonets fixed, and pieces loaded:—Four of the main-deck guns were ordered to be loaded with grape and canister shot, run in as far as the breeching would allow, to be ready to point forward on the ship's company. Before the people could well comply with the orders of going below, the Captain ordered Lieut. BOVER to fire on some of the people that were forward under the fore-castle, which he did not immediately comply with, upon which Capt. GRIFFITHS presented his pistols to him, and swore he would put him to death that moment if he did not instantly comply with his orders, in this dilemma, the Lieutenant fired, and wounded two men. The ship's company being now all below, and hearing there were some boats along side, they expressed their wish to know what they wanted, but in vain, the hammocks and spurs from their booms were thrown on all the hatchways, and the officers putting the hammocks a little aside, so as to give room fired assant down the hatchways on the unarmed men below, and wounded several severely, part of which are since dead; in the mean time the little Midshipmen were busily employed, with proper implements prepared for the purpose, to cut away the port-ropes of the middle deck, well knowing that the heart of a seaman could not hurt a boy. At last, irritated with seeing so much blood spilt, we were determined to force the gunner's store-room to procure

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small arms; they then drew cartridges from some of the lower deck guns, to supply them with powder, taking care to secure the magazines with proper centinels. Thus armed they were determined to gain the main deck to confer with the officers, on which the marines were summoned to take the oath of allegiance to the officers, but they, provoked at premeditated murder, did not consent, nor would they fire, but went and joined their unhappy shipmates. The upper deck was then stormed in spite of opposition; the officers called for quarter and then fled. The heat of passion by this time subsided, and they were used with much more humanity than the most part of them deserved. This is an impartial account of the unhappy affair, and we trust will be a warning to officers of the Navy to use men with less tyrannic sway.

	No.
Seamen dangerously wounded, and since dead,	- 3
Marines slightly wounded,	- 1
Officers wounded, one in the arm, and has since suffered amputation,	} 2

Thus ended the first action that ever the brave Admiral COLPOYS, as some are pleased to call him, was in; and had it not been owing to the kind interference of the Delegates and the boat crews, which arrived at the time they got the better of the Officers, that *gallant* Officer, with all his associates, would have fell victims to the enraged crew, which their rashness justly merited. They were then confined, each to his separate cabin, to be tried when they arrived at St. Helen's. It was the general opinion of the Seamen, and much to their credit be it spoken, on the ship's arrival at St. Helen's, to deliver the Officers, except Admiral COLPOYS, whom they were certain was the instigator of the whole, up to the Civil Law. On the 10th it was proposed, that the opinion of each ship's company should be given in writing, folded up, and not to be opened until the whole of the opinions were delivered on board the London, and the Delegates from each ship present. A signal was then made by the London for all the Delegates to attend (May 11) and deliver their respective ship's opinion, when there appeared,

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In his favour, at least that he should be left to his }
own ship's company's mode of punishment - } 12

For immediate execution - - - 5

Majority in his favour - - - 7

The Admiral and his Officers were then delivered up to the Portsmouth Magistrate.

In the beginning of our Narrative, we mentioned the aspersions thrown on our characters as British Seamen. The following concerns the Mars alone—whose crew, evil-minded men, were pleased to say, corresponded with French Agents; but they are as groundless as they are malicious: Her crew, we do not deny, were more headstrong than those of other ships. Treachery or republican principles they, like the crews of the whole Fleet, disavow. The following aspersions allude to us all, and are taken from an Hon. Member's speech in the House of Commons, inserted in the SUN of the 19th Instant, parts of which we have quoted, with necessary Remarks on the same, beginning with the following, his express words:—

“There must be a point in which the demands of the Seamen must cease.”

Can that Hon. Member entertain a doubt but we maturely weighed within our bosoms the boon we solicited, nor took advantage of our distressed country at the present momentous crisis, when so many millions were voted away for chimerical purposes. He condescends to say, “What has been granted to us, appeared to be no more than what justice required; but he could not avoid declaring his disapprobation of the mode we adopted—it was not consistent with that high character which British Seamen always maintained.” It is beyond our comprehension what measures he would adopt as plighted faith was forfeited. He farther says, and on the bare reflection of which, he might blush, if ever a blush adorned his cheek. “I fear they have been worked upon by some interference of the foulest, basest and most treacherous nature.”—Treachery! as British Seamen, we detest the thought. “If there were men who, upon other occasions, considered themselves as being oppressed, there was at least something of dignity and openness

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in complaining at the moment ; but if they wished to obtain Révenge," says he, "by endeavouring to sap and destroy the bulwark of the country, they were the basest and foulest traitors that ever disgraced a country." Dignified we are, for the services tendered our country on every occasion, when we had to dispute with the enemy (superiority of numbers not excepted) the empire of the main, of which this country maintains the ascendancy. Openness of heart and frankness of mind are the general characteristic of a British Seaman. "He never could have believed, that while the fleet of the enemy was preparing for sea, English Sailors would remain in port disputing with Government; they were the last body of men from whom he should suspect such conduct." Oh! SHERIDEN, if this be your mean opinion of British Seamen, thou knowest little, very little, of Seamen's sentiment. Our requests were moderate and just. Why then should Government (who know our deserts) dispute with us? We are not tainted with Republicanism; on its agents we would not deign a look. Impute any thing to us thy mean soul can dictate but treachery; its principles we disavow. What Revenge could he suppose we could wish to take of the country which gave us Birth? If any Revenge was our aim, it would have been on those who opposed us, private individuals, not our grateful country. That Honorable Gentleman, thinking he had defeated the Chancellor, attacked the poor, but loyal Tars. He will not find them easily defeated; opposed to a foreign foe in particular. That Hon. Member's struggles are great—a good salary he wants—then (like an Honorable Friend of his bosom) he will be silent, with Ministers in particular.

Dear Countrymen, we presume you will no longer remain ignorant—therefore beg leave to conclude our Narrative, and remain

THE LOYAL AND HUMANE TARS

Of HIS MAJESTY'S Fleet, at St. HELEN'S.

Queen Charlotte, May 13, 1797.

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